TOWN & COUNTRY CHURCH

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Biblical Faith and Rural Life

WALTER HARRELSON

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• When the Israelites left the wilderness and entered into the Promised Land they faced some of the most extraordinary dangers to their faith which they were ever to know. These dangers have continued to be a threat to all who live on the soil. Rural life has great assets to the man of faith, but it also has its perils. We are familiar with the assets but it might be worth-while to sketch the perils from the perspective of those Israelites who were giving up the life of the wilderness for that of the settled land.

The Struggle

We do not often realize what a revolution took place in the lives of the men and women who followed Joshua across the Jordan River. The hardships and trials of the long years in the desert, with its flaming sun, fierce sandstorms, scanty food, constant peril from enemy tribes, and always the lean water supply, were now behind them. Palestine is no Paradise—far from it. But for a gaunt and nearly exhausted band of refugees from Egypt it must have been like the garden of God. They came with only one real treasure: their knowledge of the love and jealousy of the one God. He and he alone had saved them from their taskmasters. He had led them through the fiery wilderness, had spread a table for them in the dry land, had opened the rocks to slake their thirst. But was He also the Lord of the new land? Did He know how to cause the grain to grow, how to bring the rains in their seasons, how to control the quickly-flooding rivers? These were questions which required an immediate answer.

The answer was made more difficult by the fact that there was already in the land a god of the clouds and the fields. Baal was his name and he was worshiped by all those who dwelt in the land around them. Baal knew the ways of the seasons. He brought the grain to fruition and saw to the water supply. Who was God in the new land—Baal or the God of Moses?

Now we know the outcome of the struggle between Baal and Yahweh, the God of Israel. But we do not often realize how serious and almost overpowering the struggle really was. Several possibilities were open to the invading tribes of Israel: 1) They could abandon the worship of Yahweh for that of Baal. 2) They could hold to their desert religion and refuse to have anything to do with any new god. 3) They could find in Yahweh their God the power and knowledge to secure their lives in the new land; that is, Yahweh could absorb the functions of the nature-god Baal.

Quite understandably, all three of these possibilities were adopted by some of the newcomers. We know from the story of Elijah's struggle that many Israelites became worshipers of Baal and abandoned their faith in Yahweh. The Nazarites and the Rechabites chose the second way. They lived, insofar as it was possible to them, wilderness faith. But the great leaders of Israel—Joshua and others like him—decided for the third possibility. How did they come to this decision?

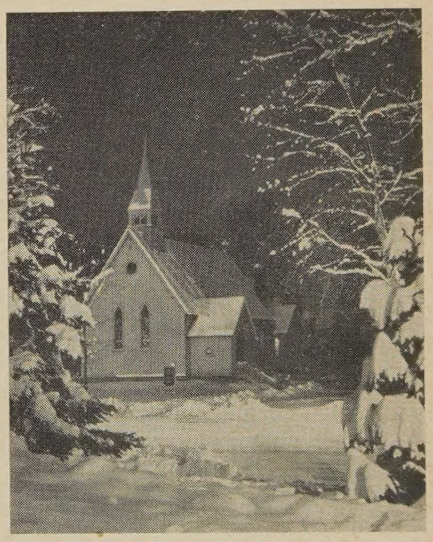

Photo from A. Devaney, N. Y.

Episcopal Church, Lancaster, N. H.

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We have at least a partial answer to the question in the twenty-fourth chapter of *Joshua*. There we find the Israelite tribes encamped around the ancient Canaanite city of Shechem. The central hill-country of Palestine has now been conquered, through warfare and treaty with the Canaanites. They are in the new land and are ready to settle down to the new way of life. But before they disperse to their appointed lands Joshua calls upon them to make the most important decision of their lives. Speaking in God's name he says: Your fathers worshiped other gods beyond the Euphrates River in the days of old. Then I took Abraham your father from there, brought him into this land, made his offspring many. Jacob and his children went into Egypt, but through Moses I led them out of Egypt, saved them by the Red Sea, and brought you through the wilderness into this land.

"Choose You Whom Ye Will Serve"

Then comes the most important words of all: "I gave you a land on which you had not labored, and cities which you had not built, and you dwell in them; you eat the fruit of vineyards and oliveyards which you did not plant." Where did this new land come from? From Yahweh your God and from no one else. It is His land, and He has chosen to give it to you. You did not conquer it by your military power, nor did you win its fields and trees from nature by the sweat of your brows. Yahweh Himself has set it before you; it is His gift to you.

Joshua now goes on to lay before his people a solemn choice. This day you are to choose whom you will serve. Three possibilities are open to them. They may choose to worship the gods of their ancestors from beyond the Euphrates River. They may choose to worship the gods of Canaan (Baal in particular). Or they may choose to worship Yahweh. The people choose Yahweh, but Joshua reminds them of the consequences of such a choice. He is the one God, he requires unswerving allegiance, he will tolerate no rivals for he is a jealous God. If they turn from Him, he will do them harm. But again the people insist that they choose Yahweh. And now Joshua reenacts the solemn covenant between them and Yahweh their God and gives to them the laws by which they are to live. The people then depart to their own lands.

As we now know from many special studies, what happened at Shechem continued to be a regular practice during the years which followed. Probably once a year the people gathered from all the land to the central holy place and there pledged anew their loyalty to Yahweh their one God. There they were re-introduced into the history of God's people. They remembered His choice of Abraham, His deliverance from Egypt, his guidance in the wilderness, His gift of this land, His own land. They once more chose Him as their God and put away from them all idolatry (although we can be sure that some were not faithful in this practice). They pledged their loyalty and obedience to the saving God who alone had cared for them and who gave them grain and wine and oil.

"The Golden Rule"

And this is how it happened that a people from the wilderness entered a land of agriculture and did not abandon their faith. The attractions of Baal worship were tremendous, we may be sure. Baal was not so demanding of his worshipers. His feasts were marked by drinking and dancing, wild abandonment to all sorts of physical excesses. All that Baal required was that his worshipers bring their offerings regularly and await his blessing at the harvest time. But Yahweh required much more. He demanded justice and faithfulness, care for the widows and orphans, for the stranger within the gate. Above all he insisted that the land was His own and that only to a faithful and obedient people would He bestow its gifts. Hail, blight, mildew, invasion—all these came when a people were disobedient, when they did not live by the requirements of justice and righteousness.

Here we come to the heart of biblical faith. Nature worship is excluded. God cannot be placated by the gifts of the soil if people are dishonest and unjust. The soil is His, the cattle are His, all that a nation has belong to God. But nature worship is so much more "natural." Mother Earth is so good to us; why should she not be adored?

And another insidious danger has arisen in more recent times with the coming of nationalism. It is extremely easy for nature worship and nation worship to go hand in hand. The soil *is* the nation, in a sense. Worship of the Fatherland means worship both of the nation and of the land which comprises it. The Nazi Blood and Soil religion is one of the more fearful examples of what this kind of faith can do to a noble people.

But it can happen to any nation. Those who live on the soil must be constantly vigilant to distinguish between the soil and Him who has given it to man. The earth is not God—it is God's creation. The nation is not God—it too is God's creation. Whose crops are these? To whom does this good land belong? For what purpose has it been entrusted to me? How have I fulfilled this trust? I believe the following text should be on the wall of every rural citizen (and on the walls of the rest of us as well):

Take heed lest you forget the Lord your God . . . lest, when you have eaten and are full, and have built goodly houses and live in them, and when your herds and flocks multiply, and your silver and gold is multiplied, and all that you have is multiplied, then your heart be lifted up, and you forget the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. . . . Beware lest you say in your heart, "my power and the might of my hand have gotten me this wealth." You shall remember the Lord your God, for it is He who gives you power to get wealth; that He may confirm his covenant which He swore to your fathers, as at this day. (Deut. 8:11-18)

Methodist Minister Wins Soil Conservation Contest

• "How does a minister happen to know anything about soils?"

"How did you get interested?"

"Did you grow up on a farm?"

These and similar questions were asked by reporters, friends and strangers when the writer happened to win a soils-judging contest recently held in his county in Southern Minnesota. The contest, of course was just a technique by conservationists to carry on their program of education. This particular contest was attended by a group of F.F.A. boys, some veterans studying agriculture under a Federal Program, and a number of other adults who were mostly farmers. A standard check and score card was provided all those attending. Recognition was given to division winners, and to the over-all winner.

Boyhood

Perhaps it is not so strange after all that a minister should have some interest and information about the "good earth." Yes, I did grow up on a farm. Of course, that was long before courses in agriculture were taught in high schools, and when conservation as a science was in its infancy. Spreading barnyard manure with a pitchfork, and hearing my father refer to the probable wisdom of crop rotation, were about as far as my training in conservation went in those days. However, something of the farm stayed with the boy. Later on it became necessary for one of the brothers to give attention to the old home "80" in eastern South Dakota, and—since I lived nearest—I was elected.

Riding a "Hobby"

Eventually I came to own two small farms, land being to me the most natural place to make a financial investment. Since I had this investment, knowing land became a hobby. I began to gather information on soil. I talked with good farmer friends, of whom I have many. I read various farm magazines. I borrowed books on soils from several libraries. I visited frequently with the vocational agricultural instructor in our town, and with the federal soil conservation supervisor, both of whom are personal friends and attend the church I serve. The latter and the county agent had invited me to the judging contest. Their invitation, and the fact that it was held on the farm of a friend, motivated my attendance in part.

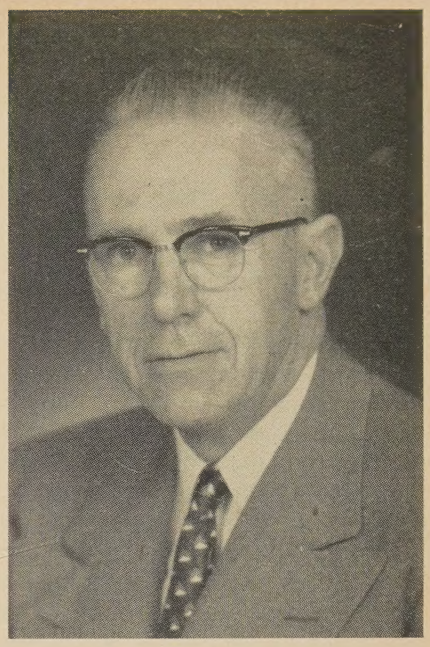
Back of all these specific interests of a somewhat personal nature, there are others which have a bearing. More than half of my ministry has been spent in villages or small cities where agriculture had a major influence upon the culture and economic affairs of my people and the community generally. I have felt that a minister in such a situation ought to be as familiar with the thinking and basic life of his people as with the abstractions of theology. I have felt that the conservation of raw materials was a sacred responsibility, and have assumed through the years that a minister might well lend his influence in a modest way toward a philosophy of life which included that aspect of stewardship.

Soil and Souls

There is, I am confident, a relationship between the conservation of soil and timber and wild life on the one hand, and the conservation and development of human personality on the other. Without attempting to develop the point here, I feel that there is a relationship between conservation and salvation.

Finally, let me add that this interest which has been so natural to me has been encouraged by my reading of the Scriptures. There I not only find the "Parable of the Soils," but many additional references which Jesus and others made to the fields. Here the lines between rural life and religion are very dim; they supplement one another.

Perhaps I can, at this point, hear some critical brother raise some question as to how anyone can do all of this and not neglect his ministry. My answer is the same as in the case of any other "hobby." One has to fix limits of time and interest. My reading on agriculture and conservation never gets into my study. You will find these books and magazines on the reading desk beside my bed. A chapter or an article before going to sleep is good. Now and then there's a night when sleep does not easily come. One could read adventure or mystery stories. But there's lots of mystery and adventure in the way the good earth ministers to our many needs.



Charles W. Spear

Pastor of The Methodist Church, Fairmont, Minnesota

Lifting their Sights

• We have made material things our god, but, behold, we have awakened to the realization that our home-made gods are not powerful enough to save us. Maybe we are approaching the time when men will fear their own gods and serve the true and living God.

—From *How Firm a Foundation,* by R. C. Campbell (Fleming H. Revell Company)

Danish Cooperation a Mighty Force

JERRY VOORHIS

• Denmark is a small country. Its kings once ruled a huge empire, covering all of Sweden, Norway, Iceland, Greenland, and most of Great Britain.

Its 4,500,000 people are content to be a small country. They are a peaceful people, asking only that they be left at peace to improve their excellent farming, to develop their artistry and handicrafts, and to bring greater unity among Scandinavian countries.

Denmark has few natural resources. Principal among them is her fertile land, kept so by careful tillage and fertilizer. Her forests are tended as carefully as cropland, and her trees supply flooring, furniture, and sometimes fuel. The average Danish farm is thirty acres. The best are from seventy-five to eighty acres.

Occupations

Denmark depends on exports for her life. Of these exports, two-thirds are farm products. Of these ninety per cent come from the cooperatives that her farmers have formed for every conceivable purpose. No less than forty national cooperative federations—each operating in its specialized field—are joined together in the Central Cooperative Committee of Denmark. One supplies fertilizer, another "feeding stuffs," another coal and oil. Others process and market cheese, or meat, or grain.

These co-ops are the most important businesses in Denmark. The slaughtering and packing cooperative, in fact, is commissioned to collect all animals that die in Denmark and all eating establishment scraps to make livestock feeds.

Besides these cooperatives—and belonging with them to the Central Cooperative Committee—is Faellesforeningen fur Danmarks Brugsforeningen (FDB). This is the consumers' cooperative owned by 2,000 local consumers co-ops throughout Denmark. Most members of these cooperatives are farmers and rural people. They get their groceries, fuel, clothing, furniture, tobacco, cosmetics, seed, and meet almost every other conceivable need through their co-ops.

The co-ops do about twenty-five per cent of all retail trade in rural towns, about twelve per cent of the national retail trade. FDB's annual business is 630,000,000 crowns ($91,250,000). FDB's retail societies include about forty per cent of the nation's people. FDB's factories make leather, margarine, furniture, chemical products, chocolate, tobacco products, wine, shoes, clothing.

FDB's organization builds from the local cooperatives. Representatives of these local co-ops meet in twenty-seven districts and choose delegates to a national assembly. The assembly names a board of seven directors for FDB, and these directors select a general manager.

Community Responsibility

Danish cooperators acknowledge an everlasting debt to the Danish folkschools. They say the folkschools do not teach people how to organize and run co-ops, but they do teach community responsibility. The leaders believe this equips people to be good co-op members.

So it was no surprise when Danish cooperators, as the climax to our tour of their farms and historic sites, took us to the Grundtvigskirche, a towering parish church (Lutheran) built like a cathedral. This church is a monument to N. F. S. Grundtvig, founder of the folkschool movement. It is built entirely of buff-colored bricks. Sixteen selected brickmasons worked on it for twenty years.

It might be termed Nordic Gothic, is severely simple, its windows clear. One feels a cold northern cleanness about it, and I seemed to stand closer to God's presence than in any other place I could imagine—as if I stood naked on a northern cape with the winds of eternity blowing about me. All around this wonderful church are clean, new houses for working-class families.

They're Proud of their Country

We dined that day at the National Scala, a fabulous restaurant owned by the national cooperatives of Sweden, Norway, Denmark, Finland, and Iceland. Alexson Dreyer, Central Cooperative Committee secretary, explained the mountains of tempting food that burdened the table by saying when people are overwhelmed by the sight of so much food they become bewildered and eat less, so restaurant profits are increased.

Dreyer and Ebbe Groes, FDB's general manager, both assured us that the Danes would stand by their historic position in International Cooperative Alliance and oppose any moves by totalitarian countries to gain control.

Danes are proud of their history and their country's beauty. They took us to Elsinore Castle on the Sjaelland coast, scene of Shakespeare's *Hamlet*.

At Castle Fredericksborg, the national museum, we saw rooms furnished with articles of every period and lined with portraits of the great people. We saw the coronation chapel where up to one hundred years ago Danish kings were crowned. Today they aren't crowned at all; they just succeed one another. The chapel is used for weddings and baptisms, and any Danish family that wants to can arrange for its use.

Wide Influence

Yes, Denmark is a small country, but its influence is world-wide—wider than in the days of its great kings and vast empire. Because of its excellent co-ops, its folkschools, and its towns that are communities of neighbors, United Nations agencies send people from every country to study Danish ways and institutions. The pen is mightier than the sword, and a great and true idea in the hands of strong men and women may be mightier than the blast of atomic bombs. In any case, the Danes, with their idea of cooperation as a key to community living, are out to prove that this is so. Everyone on earth has a stake in their success.

—Reprinted from *Cooperative News Service*

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DON F. PIELSTICK,
xecutive Director, Department of the Town and Country Church.

RUTH B. ROBINSON,
Editor

Advisory Committee

BENSON Y. LANDIS
ALICE MALONEY
E. W. MUELLER

Contributors of articles to TOWN AND OUNTRY CHURCH speak for themselves and ot for the National Council of Churches r sponsoring organizations.

Purposes of This Journal

The purposes of this Journal are:

A. To encourage cooperation among rural churches.

B. To improve the administration of the local church, this to include organization of the church, finance, religious education, community relationships, and the training of lay leadership.

C. To stimulate the development of a Christian philosophy of rural life, this to embrace ethical issues in agriculture, social reconstruction, and government programs; and the content of the minister's message.

Part of Larger Program

The Journal is an important part of an enlarged "cooperative rural church program" that will encourage a national "rural church movement."

Extension and 3D Programs of Churches

W. H. STACY

• In 1954, ninety-seven churches in Iowa received Certificates of Merit. These certificates were presented by Dr. Floyd Andre, Director of Extension Service, Iowa State College, on behalf of the Extension Service, the Iowa Christian Rural Fellowship and cooperating church organizations. For more than twenty years such recognitions have been an annual event in all Iowa counties and in all major religious bodies. It is a matter of emphasizing "3D Religion."

The Dimensions of Religious Experience

Recent developments in photography are helping us to appreciate the beauty and the meaning of pictures, as seen when the depth and range factor is shown along with the vertical and horizontal aspects of things. The "vertical" aspect of religion is in the relationships that a person develops with God. By living in accordance with religious values, he may be said to develop "horizontal" aspects. Then, as he adds perspective to his religious experience by working with others and serving on projects that extend his influence beyond his immediate personal experience, he may be adding a "distance" factor which is really a third dimension in his religious experience.

This is a brief report on five churches in Iowa where "3D Religion" is being developed. Each received an "Award of Merit with Distinction."

Report forms used in obtaining information state that the annual awards of certificates are made "with the aim of emphasizing community service relationships of churches in towns and country." The first section provides for a report of religious programs; the second for "A report on community service" and here it is stated that:

"Churches render a distinct service as they influence motives, promote vision, develop relationships, and help train leaders for worthwhile community service activities.

Churches selected for "Awards of Merit with Distinction" are considered in five groups according to size of membership.

CHURCH OF THE BRETHREN, FREDERICKSBURG

This is a small open-country church in Northeast Iowa which has only sixty-seven members on the church roll. Five of these serve on school boards; six are workers in the Farm Bureau and Extension Service programs; one is a 4-H Club leader. Five of the boys and girls are active in 4-H Club work and three are Boy Scouts.

Although located out from town, the church facilities are used for a monthly dinner meeting of the Fredericksburg Commercial Club. The girls' 4-H Club has its achievement show here and the County Rural Women's Chorus, whose president and director are members of the church, holds its Christmas party in the church building.

New program ventures initiated during the previous year included a father-son banquet, a week-end family life institute and a home dedication service for a young couple who purchased their first house. In its Rural Life Sunday Service the pastor preached on stewardship and there was the annual observance of tree planting. On Thanksgiving Day they had a Harvest Home program with a special offering for home missions.

On the "vertical" and "horizontal" aspects of religion, the church held seventy-nine worship services during the year and had a total enrollment in its Sunday School of one hundred thirteen, of whom sixty-seven were adults. Leadership training work is developed through meetings of Sunday School teachers, the work of a Pastors' Cabinet, district conferences and rallies for youth and adults and institutes conducted under the auspices of the Iowa Council of Church-

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es. The pastor, the Rev. Dean L. Farringer, visits in every church home at least once a quarter and at other times of special need. Various types of mission projects and interdenominational religious programs are supported. The men farm a twenty-acre church farm. On several occasions during the year church members helped neighbors in distress.

Panther Creek Church of the Brethren, Dallas County

In the second group of churches, with seventy-six to one hundred fifty members there were twenty-one which qualified for certificates of merit and another open-country Church of the Brethren received the award of distinction. The program of this Panther Creek church, located in an excellent farming area, parallels that of the Fredericksburg church. Fifteen of its members carry community leadership responsibilities and sixteen of its young people are active in 4-H Club work. For several years it has maintained a three-man advisory committee helping young couples to rent and buy farms. Its pastor, the Rev. Paul E. Miller, served as president of the Iowa Christian Rural Fellowship in 1953.

With a church membership of one hundred forty-nine, a total of one hundred twenty adults, thirty-five young people and seventy children are enrolled in its religious education program. Twenty-four new members joined the church on Easter Sunday.

Reports of its youth activity programs state, "Our youth try to have their program include study, worship, recreation and outreach. They have a cement tennis-volley ball court that is lighted and used for games. They sponsor the church and community Play Day on July 4. They have an active camping program."

Presbyterian Church, Dexter

Thirty-eight churches qualified for certificates of merit in the group of churches having one hundred fifty-one to three hundred members. These included Methodist, Congregational Christian, Presbyterian, Catholic, Evangelical United Brethren, Christian (Disciples of Christ), Evangelical Lutheran, Church of the Brethren, and United Presbyterian churches. The award with distinction was given to a Presbyterian church which had one hundred thirty members at the beginning of the year and one hundred fifty-eight at the close—a gain of nearly twenty per cent. Seven non-church organizations used its facilities for meetings. Ten of its members carried significant community leadership responsibilities outside the area of regular church work. The church has a Land Tenure committee which works quietly through individuals to bring farms and young men together.

Its Rogation Sunday program featured a litany and the symbolic planting of seeds in dedicated soil. For a Harvest Home service there was a special program with the state director of rural work in Presbyterian churches as guest speaker.

All men of the church are members of church work committees. They purchased and cared for feeder calves with the proceeds going to the church fund for redecorating the sanctuary. New equipment was purchased, the manse improved and a fifty-year-old mortgage of $500 was paid off during the year. Two Community Hymn Sings were sponsored with representatives from nine neighboring towns participating.

The church's pastor, the Reverend Charles R. Eble, served as a four-county director for the 1953 CROP Campaign.

Calvary Methodist Church, Stratford

Among twenty-two churches receiving certificates of merit in the group with three hundred to five hundred members, the Calvary Methodist in the town of Stratford, served by the Reverend Otto S. Steele, Jr., received the award of merit with distinction. Among its adult members were twenty-one who served as leaders in community activities and eighteen who were in educational work with the schools. Its program was outstanding with respect to religious leadership training; Christian service; cooperation with other churches; church youth activities; a God's portion sale; youth in 4-H, FFA and rural young people's groups; cooperation with the school; community leadership; contacts maintained with men in the service.

Hartley Methodist, Hartley

Nine of the churches that received certificates of merit had more than five hundred members. Of these, special recognition was given to this church in a town of 1600 which gained eighty new members during the year. Most of the programs in the community are indebted to men and women of the church for voluntary leadership services.

Its religious education program enrolls one hundred eleven adults, forty-seven young people and one hundred sixty-two children. Teams of laymen assist the pastor in visitation work—often meeting together for a social hour and instruction before calling. Each church organization has a list of prospective members for its own group and arranges for its representatives to visit with them.

The church is supporting a student in India for a four-year period. Two of its youth counselors are now giving six weeks' service to a Home Missions project in Texas. It has junior and senior choirs which meet weekly.

In submitting his report, the Reverend Raymond A. Roloff stated, "The Hartley Methodist Church is hoping that it may again merit this award as it has come to cherish this recognition. . . . I think your annual recognition serves as a stimulus toward having churches take a look at what they are doing and as a challenge toward greater endeavor."

The 1955 Convocation

• The 1955 Convocation on the Church in Town and Country will be held at Springfield, Massachusetts, October 25-27. From time to time announcements will be made in Town and Country Church concerning plans and program.

Migrant Families in California

MARILYN GILBERTSON HOOD

"Would you like to hear the story of Bambi?" the migrant ministry team leader asked two young Spanish-American boys seated aimlessly before a migrant camp tent across from a Santa Clara valley bean field near San Jose, California.

Soon other children appeared from around corners and in doorways of tents to join the boys in the story hour. Those who didn't understand English looked at the pictures.

The Protestant Churches Help

After the story hour blue-jeaned youngsters squatted barefoot in the dust to color pictures, for there was no grass. They were oblivious of the bleak surroundings of rows of tents as Marjorie Mann, staff member of the National Council of Churches' Division of Home Missions, brought out playthings from her "Harvester" station wagon—the traveling center for crafts, first aid, recreation, library, worship and homemaking.

After morning play, study and child-care sessions, the "Harvester" yielded tools and nails for a boys' woodworking class. Four borrowed sewing machines were set up as migrant ministry team members and six local volunteers showed mothers how to sew and repair clothing. That evening a movie projector from the "Harvester" showed a film.

During six weeks each summer for three years the migrant committees of the San Jose area and Palo Alto Councils of Churches have brought a team and staff member from the National Council of Churches' Division of Home Missions to Santa Clara valley.

Because of limited funds, staff and time, the team reaches only a portion of the approximately 9,000 summer migrants in the valley. Yet the members endeavor to bring glimpses of a better life and to help these second-class citizens achieve a measure of that life. It was estimated that 1,300 children were in the valley migrant ministry vacation schools last summer. One grower sent his children also.

Roman Catholic Services

There are other agencies which assist migrants in other ways. The program of the National Catholic Rural Life Conference in the Santa Clara valley includes the visit of lay catechists to the labor camps to say rosary with the families and prepare the people for the visit of the priest, who says mass on a portable altar table with vestments from an army chaplain's mass kit.

The Catholic Conference program does not provide craft work, first aid, movies, recreation or homemaking classes, according to the Rev. Donald McDonnell, San Jose, Calif., regional director.

"The church," he said, "looks upon the work in the labor camps as an emergency measure to care for the religious life of the people in the industrial farm system. However, we look for the organization of the field workers into a strong farm labor union as . . . indispensable." Working for home ownership by stabilized farm workers integrated into community life should be the aim of the church, said Father McDonnell.

Other Agencies

Emergency measures provided by California county welfare departments include food orders, clothing and housing until migrants can be returned to their county of residence, if any. If no authorization is given for sending families to another county, the migrants are referred to private agencies, as the Salvation Army, until they find employment.

In the nearby Pajaro valley around Watsonville and Pajaro, forty-five miles from San Jose, aid to migrants consist of such county emergency measures, religious and counseling services by the Catholic Church and welfare assistance by the Salvation Army. Some churches give emergency aid on an individual basis but there is no coordinated year-around program for the area's estimated 2,000 migrants during peak seasons as in the Santa Clara valley. The Pajaro valley is a center for apple, lettuce and berry crops.

The local Salvation Army aids the

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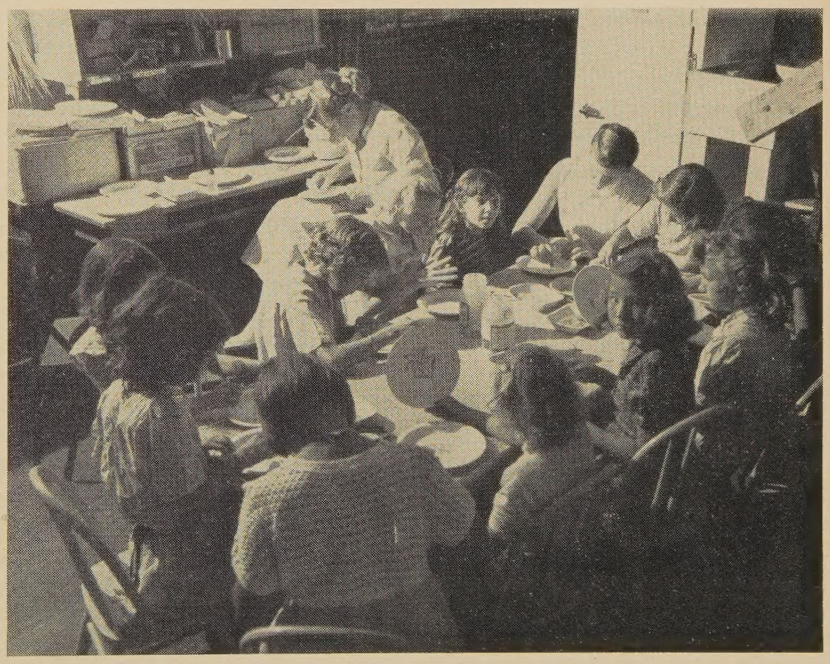


Children of Migratory Workers Learn to Use Their Hands

(*Continued from Page 7*)

stranded by providing clothing and food orders, but less than a dozen families have applied for aid this summer. The greater problem occurs in winter when traveling families are unable to find work.

National Council Staff

On a national basis, there are twenty permanent members of the migrant ministry field staff of the National Council of Churches. They are assisted in twenty-five states by two hundred summer workers—students and vacationing teachers trained in recreation, music, dramatics, crafts, story telling, Christian education, sociology and social work.

The forty-seven California volunteers and seven staff members met at Modesto, Calif., for training before going to assignments in eight "Harvester" station wagons, which carry craft materials and books for study; first-aid supplies; a moving picture projector, record player and public address system for recreation; portable altar, communion service and folding organ for worship; balls, bats and horseshoes for playground games; and magazines and books for library reading. It is estimated that the "Harvesters" serve between 50,000 and 75,000 of the nearly 500,000 migrants in California.

Local Committees

Local migrant committees work year around, conducting speakers' bureaus, planning programs and offering emergency service to stranded migrants. The San Jose Area committee includes representatives from local health, sanitation, welfare, school, church and social service agencies. More than thirty-five churches belong. Civic organizations and individuals have contributed money and materials. Two yardage shops donated cloth for sewing classes and three hardware stores gave tools for woodworking.

Although the migrant ministry is church-sponsored, religious services are not the predominating contribution and are held usually upon request. The team members emphasize, "We try to live our religion by helping the migrants to become self-sufficient and by providing recreation, a chance to learn and a humanitarian ministry."

The Lay of the Land

E. W. MUELLER

• The American farmer is called upon to raise food on many different types of land. The laws of physical growth are always the same. Plants must have light, moisture, and soil. This is true for plants that grow on flat lands and for those that grow on the hillsides. The wise farmer who moves from flat ground to hilly ground will adjust his farming methods to the lay of the land. The better he understands the soil and the more accurately he is able to appraise the lay of the land, the more generously will nature reward his efforts. If he plants, cultivates, and harvests his crops without any regard for the lay of the land, he will soon learn that nature deals harshly with those who fail to adjust their methods.

As the farmer is called upon to till many different types of land so the church is called upon to serve in many different types of communities. As it has been necessary to spend much effort to help farmers adjust themselves to the lay of the land, so the Church will need to spend considerable effort to help pastors adjust their program to "the lay of the community."

Making the Gospel Relevant

A classification of the different types of communities and a realistic evaluation as to how the Church can make the Gospel of Christ relevant to the people living in these communities is needed.

The church in her presentation of the message must be so concrete, vivid, and articulate that the man living in these various communities will recognize the relevance of the Gospel message to his situation. If this can be done much will have been gained in the direction of the church adjusting her methods to "the lay of the community." This, however, takes for granted an accurate understanding of the problems which men face. The best way that this understanding can be gained is through experience. Much time will be saved if those who have gained insight into the particular needs of certain communities will help newcomers to orientate themselves to the problems that confront the church. This, I believe, can be done through small discussion groups.

The pastor has to minister to the people of his parish. The parishioners must live their Christian faith in the social climate of their community and not in an ideal community about which they dream. It is time we evaluated the program of a congregation in the light of the social climate in which it has to bear its witness for Christ, and that we appraise the ability of the pastor according to how effectively he adjusts himself and the program of his congregation to the actual social conditions of his parish.

The Pastor's Prayer

At dawn, he marks the smoke among the trees,
And from hearths to which his daily footsteps go;
And hopes and fears and ponders on his knees,
If his poor sheep will heed his voice or no;
What wholesome turn will Ailsie's sorrow take?
Her latest sin will careless Annie rue?
Will Robin now, at last, his wiles forsake?
Meet his old dupes, yet hold his balance true?
He prays at noon, with all the warmth of heaven
About his heart, that each may be forgiven;
He prays at eve; and through the midnight air
Sends holy ventures to the throne above;
His very dreams are faithful to his prayer,
And follow, with closed eyes, the path of love.

—C. TENNYSON TURNER

Is Denominationalism Resurgent?

MARK RICH

There are evidences that denominationalism is resurgent in the rural church movement. And it is also clear that if this resurgence is allowed to develop to extremes, it will temper the improving vigor of the rural church.

Larger Parish

Take the larger parish movement as an example. It has been demonstrated that struggling denominational churches cannot be tied effectively to "sister churches" miles away. The natural association is with churches near at hand, even though they may be of another denomination. The early cooperators did not envisage the destruction of denominationalism. Indeed, they helped to bring rural denominationalism to flower in a new conclusiveness.

The larger parish idea is so natural and logical that it has wide appeal. It won the attention of denominations and they began to adopt it, although vital principles were sometimes sacrificed. Baptists have a Grouping of Churches, Methodists have the Group Ministry, Disciples herald a Pastoral Unity plan and Presbyterians have retained the term Larger Parish with Presbyterian written large in it.

Within limits these plans are good. They may even rate as excellent. Six Methodist churches adjacent to one another, with no other churches in the area, may form a natural and vigorous larger parish which gives them a council for mutual planning, a cooperative program, a staff and a proximity which permit frequent contact and the possibility of community. A remarkable revival of interest and service may ensue. The author knows denominational larger parishes which have greatly improved the health of the churches and the community they serve.

But the rub comes when this arrangement becomes the pattern for all or most churches in a denomination. It is a form of masquerading old denominationalism in the cloak of a new interdenominationalism.

Federation

Look for a moment at the federated church. This too was invented to bring together weak denominational churches into a stronger unified witness. Authoritative studies of the movement reveal its real merit, even as a denominational thrust. It has been mostly a constructive and vigorous attempt to give the church a larger witness and in this it has succeeded to a remarkable degree.

Some denominational circles regard the federated church as sound. But it seems that the number of opponents is increasing. Some church representatives lose all sense of the true nature of the federated church. They are out to "spike" it, for they tolerate nothing which seems to imperil the denominational status of a church—be it ever so weak. The community function of the church is completely overlooked.

Denominational Approaches

Let us not deny the capacity of denominations to serve the rural community. It is the writer's conviction that the rural church advance can best be made through denominations. Some excellent arrangements have been worked out, and amazing stories of effective ministries through denominational approaches are on record.

Where then are the dangers in the denominational approach? Perhaps the greatest danger is to become denominational instead of community-minded. The local church is not made for the denomination. So the question is not whether an arrangement preserves the denominational status quo but rather whether it helps the churches to a greater service for Christ in the community and elsewhere.

To overstress the denominational approach is to ignore the experience of the rural church movement. Many early rural leaders were vigorous interdenominationalists. They saw no way to preserve the institution of the rural church and its witness on a meager population base. Churches had to be more inclusive. It is still true that if the church is to work with the school and other community agencies it must do so cooperatively. The New Testament ideal of unity in diversity and diversity in unity still stands. Any group that operates in the community without coming to grips with the question of its relationship to it and to other religious forces is blind to one of our most vital concerns.

Interdenominational Adjustment

Several suggestions for an adequate program of interdenominational adjustment are valid:

First, let every denomination study the situation carefully and formulate a policy of local interdenominational relationships. Let each understand the distinction between anti-denominational, non-denominational and inter-denominational, and plan a well-rounded program—based upon the best experience of the denomination.

Second, each denomination should acquire unashamedly certain interdenominational habits. For example: administrators of rural churches can make a practice of cooperative study and guidance for certain rural fields. These studies should be followed up by mutual counselling toward effective inter-relatedness.

The *third* suggestion is for leaders to stand up in denominational circles and be counted for local ecumenicity.

Fourth—hold up the ideal of the church as an active agent for building the kingdom of God in its community. It is a noble aim to want to serve all the people in the area, and to provide Christian motivation to community relationships.

Rural America calls for denominations willing to lose themselves in a larger service. Those with broad vision and attitude will contribute to a larger life for the rural community, and they will incidentally save themselves.

From the National Convocation on the Church in Town and Country Held at Salina, Kansas, October 26-28, 1954

Cooperators

• The Convocation is an informal assembly of individuals, held under the auspices of the Department of Town and Country Church of the National Council of Churches. However, the Convocation can only be held with the cooperation of church organizations in the region or state and community agencies.

At Salina, we recorded our thanks to the First Presbyterian Church, the Kansas Council of Churches, the Salina Chamber of Commerce, the Salina Ministerial Association, the newspapers and hotels of the city, and the many church people who opened their homes.

The Reverend James S. Elliott, pastor of the host church, his staff, and the Reverend Donald W. Zimmerman, chairman of the Town and Country Department of the Kansas Council of Churches, were ever present and served us faithfully.

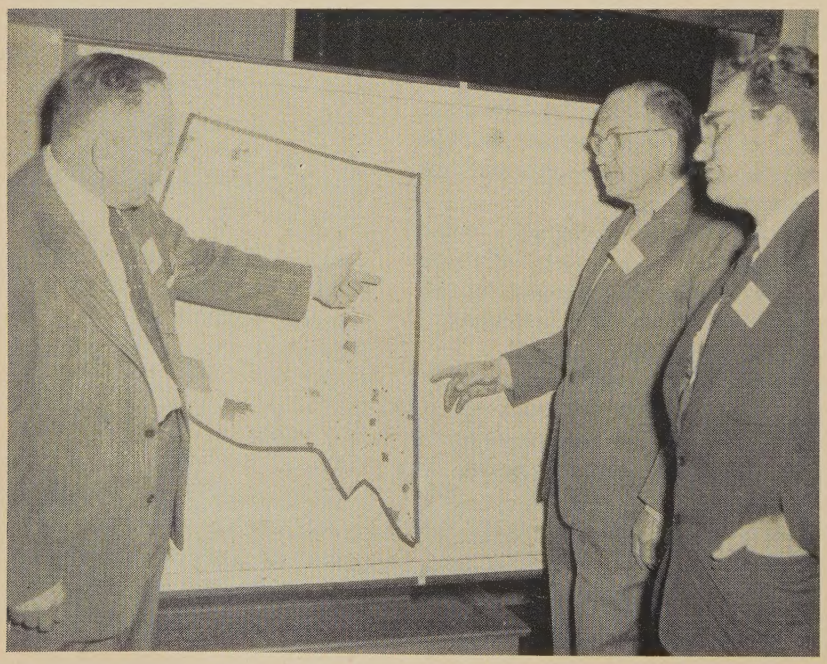
Dr. William C. Martin, Methodist Bishop and President of the National Council of Churches (center), and Marshall Harris, U. S. Department of Agriculture (right), who delivered major addresses at the Convocation, chat with Don F. Pielstick, Executive Director of the National Council's Department of the Town and Country Church.

Worship Services

• Three formal worship services were conducted by the Rev. Marvin T. Judy, staff member of the Southern Methodist University, Dallas, Texas.

The singing was held by the Rev. Joseph T. Jones, Presbyterian U.S.A. pastor in Charlotte, North Carolina.

The hymnal, *Hymns of the Rural Spirit,* was used throughout the sessions.



Henry S. Randolph, director of town and country work for the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. and newly elected chairman of the National Council's Department of Town and Country Church, was chairman of the Convocation Seminar on "Churching the Wide Open Spaces." In this picture he discusses a church-wide point with Edward D. Hamner, professor of town and country church work at Phillips University, Enid, Oklahoma (center), and the Rev. Byron L. Paxton, pastor of the Hunter Christian Church, Hunter, Oklahoma.

George P. Kerr, director of town and country work for the United Presbyterian Church and former Chairman of the National Council's Department of Town and Country Church (left), chats with Dr. M. R. Zigler, director of the Church of the Brethren's relief and rehabilitation program in Europe (center), and Herbert E. Stotts of Denver's Iliff School of Theology (right). Dr. Zigler and Dr. Stotts delivered major addresses at the Convocation.

THE REGISTRATION

Presbyterians	216
Methodists	157
Evangelical United Brethren	122
Episcopalians	61
Congregational-Christians	60
Baptists	56
Evangelical and Reformed	51
Disciples	41
Lutherans	21
Church of the Brethren	13
Not designated and all others	8
TOTAL	806

How Did the Convocation Start?

• The Convocation was begun in 1943 because of the conviction that there should be a regularly held gathering. National conferences had been held before under church auspices, in 1916 and in 1936. It was felt that there must be a continuous process. The decision to inaugurate the Convocation, and the journal, TOWN AND COUNTRY CHURCH, was considerably hastened by expressions of opinions as to their need on the part of prominent laymen in the churches.

Who Follows it Up?

The ideas and specific plans considered are implemented in numerous ways and channels. The persons who took part in the Salina meeting are the first and foremost line of implementation. These men and women live in rural communities. They are pastors and lay people in local churches. They are administrators of numerous denominational and interdenominational agencies. They are teachers and writers, and students in colleges and seminaries.

The local and state councils of churches have special responsibilities for furthering the cooperative aspects of the Convocation's ideas and plans. There is an extensive follow-up through the religious press and news services. The daily press calls attention to Convocation highlights. Nationally, a responsibility for follow-up rests upon the various rural church departments of the constituent denominations, and also their agencies of religious education.

The Theme

The 1954 Convocation took for its theme, "A United Christian Witness for Rural America." Guided by this, the conferring churchmen, farm specialists, sociologists and educators studied a wide range of topics in seventeen different seminars. A "round-up" of the proceedings of these seminars will be presented in the next issue of TOWN AND COUNTRY CHURCH.

The Convocation brings together many of those interested in the church in the rural communities of the nation.

Robert Frost on Rural Life*

BENSON Y. LANDIS

• I have heard Robert Frost read his poems and make comments in the large auditorium of the New School of Social Research, in New York, when many hung on his words. While sitting there I resolved to ask him for an interview, which he generously granted. In the apartment of one of his friends we talked, and I later interpreted the conversation in *Rural America* (of which I was editor 1923-41), in June, 1931. I will quote from that interview below. It also appeared in full in TOWN AND COUNTRY CHURCH for January, 1951; much of it fits into this series.

In South Shaftsbury, Vermont, I called on Mr. Frost, about 1933, in the days when I was actively interested in Fletcher Farm, an adult education center in Vermont, now a summer school of arts and crafts. Mr. Frost later came to Fletcher Farm for a high occasion, an evening when he read his poems. Then I never saw him until there was snatched a conversation in the lobby of a Washington hotel, a few years ago, when Mr. Frost was on his way to read poetry in Southern colleges, on a cold January day. I recall that he expressed some skepticism about the process of uniting churches, and that he said a number of things about Jonah. I didn't particularly want to hear about Jonah that morning, but I note Mr. Frost's ruminations on a Biblical subject for the benefit of the readers of this paper.

Mr. Frost told me he had expressed curiosity over Alvin Johnson's invitation to him to read poetry at the New School of Social Research. Seems Mr. Frost didn't think poetry and social research would be altogether compatible. Mr. Johnson, as I recall, referred to the fact that in the Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences, of which he was editor, the careers of a number of poets would be recorded. Mr. Frost said: "Oh, yes, in that cyclopedia you will record good poets and bad men, such as Byron and Shelley. What must I do to get into that cyclopedia?" Mr. Johnson is reported to have said: "You must be a better poet."

I was also led to Robert Frost by George W. Russell (AE), who had been on one of his lecture tours in America in 1930, and had spoken before several thousand people at the American Country Life Conference in Madison, Wisconsin, in October, 1930. AE had told me in conversation that people interested in rural social issues and programs in America "should enlist the poets."

I went to the apartment in New York with no reformer's aim of enlisting Mr. Frost. I mentioned casually AE's remark, and Mr. Frost answered it indirectly and directly: he was not for reformers and did not take part in movements. In that talk Mr. Frost told much of his own philosophy, and gave in no uncertain terms his own conception of the values of rural life.

"Poetry is more often of the country than of the city," insisted Mr. Frost. "Poetry is very, very rural—rustic. It stands as a reminder to rural life—as a resource—as a recourse. It might be taken as a symbol of a man, taking its rise from individuality and seclusion—written first for the person that writes, and then going out into its social appeal and use. Just so the race lives best to itself—first to itself storing strength in the more individual life of the country—of the farm—then going to market and socializing in the industrial city.

"I should expect life to move back and forward—now more individual on the farm, now more social in the city—striving to get the balance. We are now at a moment when we are getting too far out into the social-industrial, and are at the point of drawing back—drawing in to renew ourselves. The country life we are going back to I can't describe in advance, but I am pretty sure it will not be the country life we came out of years ago. Farming—what survives of it—has deamed itself in an attempt to imitate industrialism. It has lost its self respect. It has wished itself something other than what it is. That is the only unpardonable sin—to wish you were something you are not—something other people are. It is so in the arts and in everything else.

"I think a person has to be withdrawn into himself to gather inspiration so that he is somebody when he comes out again among folks—when he 'comes to market' with himself. He learns that he's got to be almost wastefully alone.

"The farmer has industrialized to his own hurt. He has made himself too socially right on the farm. He has entered into the competitive outside life. The strength of his position is that he's got so many things that he doesn't need to go outside for. The country's advantage is that it gives many pleasures and supplies many needs for nothing. The tendency of our day is to throw away all of these things and count them worthless. Many of our country people don't value anything unless they buy it in the town—where townspeople buy it. Country people go to the movies instead of looking around them. Some want to put into district schools manual training and agricultural courses which are more elementary than the training of a child on the farm. It is ridiculous.

"The farm is a base of operations—a stronghold—you can withdraw into yourself there. 'Fill your cellar and fill your larder' so that you can go into the siege of winter with zest. Go to the cellar stairs, look at the preparations for winter. Smell the apples. Have a good cellar. That is a part of the good life.

"A person is always being pulled out of himself socially, and it is always in the person—and up to the person—to take corrective measures. He should know when to say: 'I am too much out of myself—too overt.' The tendency for preservation of his individuality draws him back, and I would guess that the loss of a people is in its industrialization. They are inclined to draw away from

* Fourth and last of a series of articles.

their base which is in the country. I don't know whether we can 'take thought' to make us turn back. The thing will almost take care of itself. But we won't go back the way we came. We may have a richer farm life when we go back to it."

I referred to "AE's" leadership in organizing cooperatives and in other social action.

"AE has done wonderful things with the cooperatives in Ireland. But I am not much interested in movements. I am not a person of that kind. I am not enterprising enough. I am too irregular. I keep bad hours. I do not try to reform. I have no quarrel with life and I myself do not try to 'run' life. I simply express confidence that the kind of thing I naturally like is always going to be the important thing in life."

I persisted in questioning about cooperatives. I wanted to know if Mr. Frost thought that the farm people he met were becoming more cooperative. He gave me the gist of his ideas as to why people should cooperate.

"You cooperate in order that you may be a better individual. You associate yourself with your fellows in order that you may be the stronger yourself. The individual and the social—I know those two things are always getting something out of each other. But I am mostly interested in solitude and in the preservation of the individual. I want to see people sufficiently drawn into themselves. Most of the iceberg is under the water. Most of oneself should be within oneself. A man must do that in order to be somebody when he comes out to market with other folks. He should be a large proportioned individual before he becomes social. If a man is wastefully alone, he should be better company when he comes out."

Convocation Report

• The full report of the 1954 Convocation on the Church in Town and Country may be procured from your denominational executive on town and country church work.

The Groton, N. Y. Journal and Courier

• I sent to Groton, Tompkins County, N. Y. for copies of the weekly paper, *The Journal and Courier,* largely because in past years, several friends of mine have been ministers there. The paper was begun in 1866, and the present volume is No. 89. The publishers generously sent me three copies, when I asked for only one.

CROP (Christian Rural Overseas Program) must be important in the section, because I found several mentions. For example, at the South Lansing Grange, a movie on CROP was shown, and several churches announced special events for the program.

Groton is near Ithaca, and a musical in Bailey Hall is announced. Bailey Hall gets its name from a famous man, Liberty Hyde Bailey, former dean of the New York College of Agriculture, chairman of Theodore Roosevelt's Commission on Country Life, retired and living in Ithaca.

"One Hundred Eighty Have Requested Adult Education," reads a heading. These people have all registered at Groton Central School. Seventeen will take woodworking; seventeen, clothing; fourteen, oil painting. Two adults will take "beginning Latin"—this in 1954!

The editor runs an "Editor's Prayer," in quotes from the Woodward *Enterprise,* one line of which runs: "Blessed are those who do not think they could run the paper better than the editor . . . yea, thrice blessed are these, because there are so few of them in the community."

Cornell Farm Study Courses, Roberts Hall, Ithaca, offers a new correspondence course in Beekeeping. Seems there's a shortage of honey bees in New York State these days. (The writer of these lines is the proud owner of a certificate saying he has satisfactorily completed a correspondence course in home vegetable growing, and heartily recommends Cornell's Farm Study Courses.)

A delegation of forty Jehovah's witnesses went from Groton to Auburn for three days of Bible study. There is a broad standing head: "The Church Points the Way." I note items about many churches in Groton and other points, especially because my friends Mark Rich and Ralph Williamson once served in the town.

The new elementary school at Berkshire will be named the Edward R. Eastman School, in honor of the editor and president of *The American Agriculturist* (published in Ithaca), also vice-chancellor of the New York Board of Regents.

—Benson Y. Landis

The Christian Farmer and His Government

• A vocational seminar on "The Christian Farmer and His Government" will be held at Washington, D. C., February 8-10, 1955. This is an annual seminar organized by the National Council of Churches' Department of the Church and Economic Life, in cooperation with denominational departments of Social Education and Action and of the Town and Country Church, as well as state and local councils of churches. Those invited are lay men and women who are farm operators and members of farm organizations, as well as rural pastors, church executives, and others interested. It is an informal study group with no resolutions or findings. Each individual makes his own inquiries.

Registration and Headquarters will be the New York Avenue Presbyterian Church, 1313 New York Avenue, N. W., Washington, D. C. No advance registration is required and the only cost of the seminar is for a luncheon on Thursday, February 10. Those attending make their own arrangements for lodging and meals.

For further information write to: Rev. Cameron P. Hall, Department of the Church and Economic Life, National Council of Churches, 297 Fourth Avenue, New York 10, N. Y.; the Social Action or Town and Country Church office of your denomination; or your council of churches.

Four-In-One

• The four Congregational churches of the Namekagon Parish in northwestern Wisconsin work together as a unit. Though each has its own individuality, own government, and its own Sunday school and church service, yet most of the activities are carried on together.

For several years there has been a group meeting each Thursday night for Bible study and prayer. The group meets in the homes of the members. One Thursday in each month it is in the Anah church area, one Thursday in Earl, one Thursday in Springbrook, and one Thursday in Trego. Although the individuals present are quite different from week to week yet the attendance remains quite steady at from twelve to fifteen. Even during the several months between pastors the group met regularly.

Men's Club

Last year a parish Men's Club was organized. First we met two months in each church, but found it more convenient to hold all meetings in the Royal Neighbor Hall in Earl. Each church takes its turn at furnishing food and entertainment. The meetings open with a devotional service, conducted by the pastor, which includes a hymn or two, prayer, Scripture-reading, and a brief address or the reading of a short article. This is followed by the business meeting and entertainment. The latter is often a movie or a talk by some outsider. Then the men play shuffle board and dart-ball —and eat. The men bought a new screen for movie projection and keep up the repairs on the moving picture projector. In June they entertained the ladies with a supper.

Youth Program

The youth program is also on a parish basis. The Catechism Class meets once a week in the parsonage in Trego. Last year there were fifteen members with twelve of them finishing work and being confirmed in a union service on the fifth Sunday in May. (We have union services each fifth Sunday.) This year there are eighteen members, beginning with eighth graders. Some of them have a round-trip of thirty-five miles in order to attend the class.

For the young people there is also a Pilgrim Fellowship which is growing in numbers and popularity. The group, consisting of twenty-six members, meets twice a month (for two months) in each church each year. The meetings are led by the young people themselves. First, there is a devotional session, then a discussion on a topic of importance to them—such as "dating," gambling, drinking, reckless driving, etc. After a business meeting there are games and refreshments, and finally a closing fellowship circle with the Mizpah Benediction. Then, if the parents forget to come after the young people, we play games again until they are called for—and the boys and girls don't seem to be one bit impatient.

—Walter A. Smith,
pastor of the Parish

Churchman Brings Water to Indian Reservation

• Mason McComb—farmer, conservationist, church worker and community leader of Zenith, Kansas—has placed the Ol Jato Indian Mission in southeastern Utah eternally in his debt.

It seems that the Rev. Fred Patterson, United Presbyterian missionary at Ol Jato, was telling the story of his work to the Zenith church and explaining some of the problems faced by the Indians living in that remote area. During the course of his talk Mr. Patterson said that for years the search for a water supply had gone on without success. The Indians had to haul their water supply a distance of thirty-five miles over rough trails.

Mr. McComb listened intently. The water problem intrigued him. He told the missionary: "When my family and I take our vacation in August, we will load our camping gear in a truck and come see you." In August the McCombs did just that. After extensive study of the terrain and some careful prospecting, Mr. McComb chose a site for a well. The Navajo tribal council obtained a permit for drilling from the Utah water resources board. How well Mr. McComb had sized up the situation to find water in desert land was revealed when word came from Ol Jato that the drillers hit the vein only twelve feet underground and had a flow of clear soft water that was producing at a sustained rate of forty-two gallons a minute.

This is by no means the end of the story. Mr. McComb ordered a pump and an engine. He knew the well was 1500 feet from the Mission and 140 feet down a hillside. A lot of uphill pumping would be involved. This man of action studied all phases of the problem, then ordered equipment. When the equipment was unloaded at Zenith, every bolt, coupling, and measurement had been studied so that once the material was taken to the Mission it could be installed immediately.

Mr. McComb said when he reached the mission the water situation was worse than ever. There was a good supply in the new well, but no pump. The seventeen-gallon well was out of commission. Every drop was being hauled thirty-five miles.

He went to work immediately. How well he had calculated may be judged from the fact that thirty-five minutes after he stopped his truck at the well site, the engine had been set on blocks, the pump was in place, and water in quantities the Indians never had known was gushing into a tank. When the plastic pipe was coupled later and laid up the steep incline to a 10,000 gallon supply tank at the Mission, Ol Jato's own waterworks was in business. At the top of the incline, the pump was able to put seventeen gallons of water a minute into the reservoir. The luxury of about 25,000 gallons of tap water daily was available for the first time.

This, in brief, is the saga of a churchman who was confronted with a need, accepted it as a call to his own abilities, and did something about it with energy and devotion.

—Reprinted with permission from *Christian Union Herald*

BOOK REVIEW

'he Sociology of Mennonite Evangelism. By John A. Hostetler. The Herald Press, Scottdale, Pa. 1954. $4.00.

In the Mennonite Church, which the largest of a number of denomrations of the Mennonite family of ligious bodies, the average annual et gain in membership, 1904-51, was 2 per cent. During the years 1942-1, inclusive, 80 per cent of the memers came from the offspring of famies belonging to the church. Rural ongregations did not grow as rapll as the urban, but there is no easure of migration from country city which presumably went on as other denominations.

"The loss of membership is reted directly or indirectly to the obility of members. . . .

"Persons who become members do because they know intimately or ce-to-face one or more members of e Mennonite Church. . . .

"More college-trained persons ave the church than join." The out-group converts" are mainly perons who have had elementary eduation. "The higher the formal eduation attained, the greater is the ndency to leave the Mennonite hurch. . . ."

This is a most thorough study.

—B. Y. L.

Centennial of Horace Plunkett

ERMA ANGEVINE

Horace Plunkett, pioneer of farm cooperatives in Ireland, was born hundred years ago. British organations have honored his memory.

Son of an Irish landowner, he was ducated in England. He studied at xford University when Ruskin, ill, and others were stirring the onscience of thinking men. Politial, industrial, and social reform was odifying the crude, early 19th cenry capitalism.

Ill-health drove Plunkett from the damp, Irish climate and he spent ten years in the U.S.A., running his own cattle ranch in Wyoming.

Family affairs called Plunkett back to Ireland in 1889. An important land reform had just been accomplished. For the first time, the Irish peasant enjoyed security of tenure, a fair rent, and compensation for any improvements he might make. Within twenty years tenancy was abolished.

Plunkett said that it wasn't enough to give the peasant land if, facing competition from cheap products of the new world, he went on farming by primitive methods, selling small quantities of inferior produce, and leaving the business side of farming to merchant-moneylenders.

The year he left Oxford, Plunkett founded a small consumer co-op on his father's estate. Now he started a campaign for a co-op in every village. But he found that farmers didn't understand shopkeeping, and shopkeepers were roused in violent opposition.

Plunkett changed his tactics. He advocated co-op creameries to make butter, one of Ireland's largest exports. These succeeded, and from them came the Irish Agricultural Organization Society, a federation of creameries and other co-ops, to promote and direct the growing cooperative movement.

Plunkett's reputation spread throughout the British Isles, and his Irish Agricultural Organization Society was copied in England, Scotland, and Wales. His influence extended to the United States. For many years, he was a friend and adviser of President Theodore Roosevelt.

In his old age, Plunkett gave most of his fortune to a trust fund to continue his life's work. Even before his death in 1932, the Horace Plunkett Foundation was known as a "clearing house of information on cooperation in all countries in which co-ops were contributing to better business and better living for rural people."

—Reprinted from
Cooperative News Service

Wide River

A river that's wide and glistening
May flow slowly out to the sea,
Linger at bends and listening
To the bird, the toad, and the tree.

It heeds no time clock made by man.
The whole of a great countryside
So powerfully it does scan,
And humbles men possessed by pride.

—*Rusticus*

The Dial versus Mildred

• In Jamaica, Vermont, Mildred is leaving and a dial system is being installed. Mildred was the telephone operator, and center of a vast system of intercommunication in a rural area.

There's no doubt, judging by comments, that the dial does not compare with Mildred. People have been trying the dials, just to see if they work, but they do miss Mildred day by day.

Mildred Perry wept a little when the mechanics put the final touches on the new system. And farmers are weeping over the new system of names for exchanges. South Londonderry becomes V A lley—in the name of progress. Even Brattleboro, a city, has its name completely erased—it becomes A L pine. Thus telephoning takes away something of the character of a place.

There are a few things on the asset side. There are not so many people on party lines as in the old days. Also, your friends on the party line can't hear you dial as they used to hear you in the old days. Thus fewer people know when to listen in. Seems that privacy is gaining.

—*New York Times,* July 4, 1954.

From other sources, it is said a Vermont farmer remarked this summer: "With all our progress, we ain't gettin' anywhere in this old world."

FAO Training Centers Aim to Help Rural People

• This is one of the basic aims of FAO as stated in the Preamble to the Organization's Constitution. At each FAO Conference, member nations reemphasize the importance of extension services to rural development. Better living standards can be obtained by changing the agricultural pattern.

In carrying out the recommendations of member nations to further the development of extension and demonstration services—the educational services which can bridge the gap between modern research and workers in agriculture, forestry, and fisheries—FAO held several extension centers during the past summer as a means of disseminating knowledge to larger groups of people.

A Training Center in Agricultural Extension Methods was held from July 12 to August 7 at Wageningen, Netherlands. This Center was a repeat of a similar one held in Wageningen during the same period last year. No previous course of this kind, on an international basis, had ever been held in Europe.

Two Training Centers on Extension were held in the Western Hemisphere. The first one, for the countries of the Andean region, was held in Lima, Peru, from July 10-Oct. 2 and treated modern extension methods. This training program included several weeks of course work and two months in field applications, under the supervision of experienced Peruvian extension agents.

The second one was a ten-day working Center for Extension Development, and was held in Kingston, Jamaica, from August 5-14. The general objectives of this Center were to provide an exchange of experience and opinion on problems of agricultural extension work and to formulate procedures for increasing the effectiveness of agricultural extension services in the Caribbean Region. Discussions centered around such questions as the function of an extension service, the family approach to extension, extension programs, selection and training of personnel, new approaches to extension work, and a regional program to strengthen extension services in the Caribbean. Two tours to observe extension work in Jamaica supplemented the discussions.

The Key

• Everyone who is exposed to the truth of Christ holds the key for other people. The more you think about it, the more alarming it becomes. We have to bring the truth to them or they will never get it.

I think there is nothing in the world that bothers me more than this. I am just not worthy to be trusted with that key. I am afraid to go to the Judgment Day and have people point accusing fingers at me and say, "You held the key, and you failed to open the door for God." That is a terrifying thought! I wish there were some way to escape it, but it seems to be what the Bible says. If we could feel that only Peter had the keys, we might let Peter take the blame. It is to obvious, when you think about it, that it applies to us. Even if our door is open toward heaven, but closed toward people, then we have shut them out. Jesus put it positively, as well as negatively, in the end of the 25th chapter of Matthew: "Inasmuch as ye did it to the least of these you did it to me, and inasmuch as you failed to do it to them, you failed to do it to me." And that is terrifying.

—From *Channels of Spiritual Power* by Frank C. Laubach

(Fleming H. Revell Company)

Work

• No one is happy without some constructive work to do. Even if we do not have to earn money, we are satisfied only when we have found work which expresses something of ourselves. Happy is the person whose work is its own reward and whose wages are an additional bonus!

Fortunately there is open to everyone a full share in the greatest work of all, the work of God. Words written, spoken or thought—are the tools. The whole of life is the raw material. Full, humble and glorious worship is the product.

You can spend any part of any day and you should spend many parts of every day in this work. You may put into words the joy and thankfulness you feel for some great good fortune and hear the echo of that praise ringing in the heavens where thousands thank God for His goodness. Or you may keep taking up one by one, time after time, the needs of your life and others, the hunger of Koreans, the frustration of Germans, the fear and suspicion of French, the laziness of your neighbor or your own pride that you are not as some other people you might mention. Hold before God these needs.

This is the work, rewarding in itself though seldom paid for by money, in which you may find some of the joy you are missing. Will you join others in doing it under God?

—Philip Humason Steinmetz

Peace in Winter

A rill of water, dark with sun,
In contrast to the gleaming snow,
It makes a pretty swirling sound
I pause to watch its merry flow.

Above, the twigs are hung with white
Like puffy boles of cotton caught
And here the bank is rounded high
That stump, a woodland pulpit
wrought.

But who am I to preach to them
The silent folk of pasture lot?
The chipmunk there would quirk
his tail,
He has a wisdom I have not.

The sparrow even has his lore
Of where the food is found in store
The squirrel lets well enough alone
He eats his nuts, the dog his bone

But here I am a preaching when
It's only of the peace I find
Beside this stream, a winter's day
I would be bringing to your mind

—the late Floyd Morris

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